

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT

for the

Middle District of North Carolina

United States of America  
v.  
Christopher John Early Phillips

Case No.  
1:19MJ249-1

Defendant(s)

CRIMINAL COMPLAINT

I, the complainant in this case, state that the following is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

On or about the date(s) of July 28 2019 - August 3, 2019 in the county of Forsyth in the  
Middle District of North Carolina, the defendant(s) violated:

Code Section

18 U.S.C. § 875(c)

Offense Description

Transmit a Threat in Interstate Commerce

This criminal complaint is based on these facts:

See affidavit.

☒ Continued on the attached sheet.

  
Complainant's signature

FBI Task Force Officer Max Wooten

Printed name and title

Sworn to before me and signed in my presence.

Date:

8/15/2019

City and state:

Winston-Salem, North Carolina

  
Judge's signature

Joi Elizabeth Peake, U.S. Magistrate Judge

Printed name and title

**AFFIDAVIT IN SUPPORT OF AN  
ARREST WARRANT AND A CRIMINAL COMPLAINT**

I, M.S. Wooten, having been duly sworn according to law, depose and state that:

1. I am employed as a Corporal with the Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD) and have been so employed since 2005. I am currently assigned to the Charlotte Division, Greensboro Resident Agency Office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation' as a Task Force Officer (TFO), and have been so since November 2012. In this capacity, I am authorized to investigate matters involving violations of federal law. I hold the Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate issued by the North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Education Standards Commission.

2. As a Federal Task Force Officer, I am authorized to investigate violations of United States laws and to execute warrants issued under the authority of the United States. I have conducted and assisted with numerous investigations involving the commission of violent crimes, such as shootings, aggravated assaults, robberies, threats of mass violence, etc. Through instruction, training, experience, participation in investigations, and the exchange of information with other law enforcement, agents and officers, I have become familiar with the manner in which people commit violent acts and the methods, language, and terms that are used to further their criminal activities.

3. As a Federal Task Force Officer, I am familiar with the Federal Criminal Codes and know that it is a violation of:

*18 U.S.C. § 875(c)*, for any person who transmits in interstate or foreign commerce any communication containing any threat to kidnap any person or any threat to injure the person of another, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than five years, or both.

4. The facts set forth in this affidavit are the products of the affiant's investigation as well as the investigation of other law enforcement officers. The information in this affidavit is provided for the limited purpose of establishing probable cause. The information is not a complete statement of all the facts related to this case.



5. On or about July 29, 2019, a male caller, self-identified as Chris Phillips, called the Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, located at 1730 Link Road, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, from telephone number 910-352-6439. The caller stated he was raped by a priest approximately 30 years ago, and he made threats to the church secretary (victim) that he would kill her and others at the church. The victim became fearful for her safety and hung up the phone. Phillips called back at approximately 1:50 p.m. and made additional threats including the statement, "I'm going to bring my knife, and I'm going to cut everybody's throats that was involved in the rape of me."

6. On July 29, 2019, a male caller, self-identified as Chris Phillips, contacted the Winston-Salem Police Department from telephone number 910-352-6439 to file a report regarding allegations of rape against an unidentified priest. Phillips stated he was going to kill the priest. Phillips informed Winston-Salem Police that he was homeless and living in Florida.

7. On August 3, 2019, Phillips called Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church again multiple times from telephone number 910-352-6439. Due to the victim's fear for her safety, she did not answer the phone. Phillips left multiple voicemail messages claiming to have been raped, and he also stated, "...obviously, I'm not gonna get anything out of it except satisfaction I'm killing each and every one...on of all of y'all." He also stated, "Either way, vengeance upon your church is coming soon." Phillips also stated he was going to burn the church down in approximately twelve weeks.

8. An investigation conducted by Corporal Wooten and other members of the Winston-Salem Police Department determined the phone number was 910-352-6439 and was operated by Sprint. Law Enforcement and North Carolina state database records indicated the subject's telephone number was associated with CHRISTOPHER JOHN EARLY PHILLIPS, DOB 04/09/1979, last known address of 242 Marsh Hen Drive, Wilmington, NC 28409. Additional queries for Phillips indicated he has a residence in Venice, Florida.

9. On August 9, 2019, a court order was provided to Sprint requesting historical cellular records, including historical GPS data, which were subsequently provided to FBI personnel. A review of those

records indicated number 910-352-6439 contacted Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church multiple times on July 29, 2019 and August 3, 2019, and those calls were utilizing a cellular tower in Florida.

10. Based on further cellular analysis, FBI in the Greensboro Resident Agency determined Phillips was still in the North Port, Florida area, and FBI personnel in Greensboro coordinated with FBI personnel in the Sarasota, FL resident agency to locate and interview Phillips. On August 14, 2019, FBI and North Port authorities interviewed Phillips at a hotel in North Port, FL. Interviewing agents were able to confirm Phillips' voice was the same voice on the recorded voicemails containing the threats. Phillips also admitted to calling a church in Winston-Salem but could not recall what he said.

5. In light of the foregoing facts, I respectfully assert that probable cause exists for the issuance of a Criminal Complaint for the violation of 18 U.S.C. § 875(c).



Max Wooten  
FBI Task Force Officer

Sworn to and Subscribed before me this 15 day of August, 2019.



Joi Elizabeth Peake  
UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE